



Community Preservation Act Committee

Date: March 25, 2021

Time: 4:03 pm – 4:40 pm

Location: Conducted remotely due to Covid-19.

DRAFT Minutes

Remote Participation: Eugene Benson,
Eric Helmuth,
Leslie Mayer,
JoAnn Robinson,
Clarissa Rowe,
Pamela Heidell,
Ann Woodward.

Not in Attendance: Nick Mitropolous.

Also Attending Remotely: Jim Feeney,
Pam Hallett (Housing Corporation of Arlington).

Chair Eric Helmuth welcomed everyone at 4:03 pm. Helmuth explained that due to Covid-19 the meeting was conducted remotely and read through the Town's disclaimers about remote meetings.

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

- 1) Eric Helmuth asked for review and approval of the minutes of March 11th.
 - i. Pamela Heidell pointed out she was not listed as absent.
 - ii. Ann Woodward requested revision of item "10".
 - iii. Clarissa Rowe moved approval of the minutes as amended, Eugene Benson seconded.
 - iv. Role call vote:
 1. Eugene Benson: Yes
 2. Leslie Mayer: Yes
 3. Ann Woodward: Yes
 4. JoAnn Robinson: Yes
 5. Clarissa Rowe: Yes
 6. Pamela Heidell: Abstain
 7. Eric Helmuth: Yes

Discussion and vote: Special Application from Housing Corporation of Arlington for emergency rental assistance

- 1) Eric Helmuth introduced the recent emergency application from the Housing Corporation of Arlington. Eric Helmuth and Clarissa Rowe specifically invited this application due to limited housing requests this cycle, and because the need for this funding was not well understood in September during the normal grant cycle.
 - a. Pam Hallett first noted their CDBG-funded solar panel installation was redirected to support their homelessness prevention program. They believe this \$100,000, when paired with normal fundraising proceeds, would be sufficient. However, they have already disbursed \$116,000 to date, with 120 applications pending. The HCA believes the same recipients will continue to need assistance due to ongoing economic circumstances. Pam appreciated greatly that the Committee was willing to consider this application due to the outstanding need in the community.
 - b. Clarissa Rowe stated the entire Committee had discussed the ongoing need for rental assistance, so this prompted the outreach.
 - c. Eric Helmuth asked if this just served HCA tenants. Pam stated only 20 percent of funding went to their residents, which may grow, but largely went to other Arlington households. Leslie Mayer asked why these folks reached out to HCA as opposed to the Town. Pam Hallett believe the CDBG process necessitated a lottery which may not reward all applicants. described the CDBG lottery does not award all applicants. Pam Hallett also described how many applicants come through larger social service network, and HCA also helps with RAFT applications with Metro Housing.
 - d. Eugene Benson asked about income verification. Pam Hallett states they request evidence of 3 payroll periods or proof of layoff. HCA also asks applicant leases to verify amounts, and they send checks only to landlords. Eugene wants to be sure this program meshes with the Town program that was already approved. Pam Hallett noted the reporting and reimbursement mechanism requires close coordination with the Town. Pam Hallett noted the town program only support rent on a go-forward basis, with no consideration to back rent.
 - e. Eugene asked about how this application can get before Town Meeting for consideration. Clarissa Rowe noted this is an emergency application, and the warrant article can be amended accordingly.
 - f. Ann Woodward asked if applicants are ever turned away. Pam Hallett stated it happens when documentation is insufficient or there is a feeling that income is too substantial. However, most applicants are in desperate need. Pam Hallett confirmed for Ann Woodward that HCA uses the same 60% AMI upper income limit as the Town when considering applications.
 - g. Leslie Mayer requested clarification on the project budget. Pam Hallett offered that all funds would directly support rental assistance payments, and that staff salary costs were covered with other funds.
 - h. Pamela Heidell inquired if stimulus funds factored in at all. Pam Hallett noted that some were received via a grant from Lahey, but there were also significant private donations.

- i. JoAnn Robinson asked about the number of applications received. Pam Hallett confirmed 120 are pending, but about 230 received in total.
- j. Eric asked how to delineate this as a short-term assistance program. Pam Hallett described their education and counseling efforts, noting this program has been in effect since 1991, aimed at assisting applicants with regaining employment, even if in a different industry or field. They also help apply for other subsidies and public housing. Similarly, HCA helps people understand when they may be overpaying for housing and directs them to more affordable units. All of these efforts are geared towards making the program sustainable over time. Eric Helmuth was pleased to hear this as those in the service industry will be impacted long after vaccination efforts are complete.
- k. Clarissa Rowe moved to accept and approve this emergency application, Leslie Mayer seconded.
- l. Roll call vote:
 - 1. Eugene Benson: Yes
 - 2. Leslie Mayer: Yes
 - 3. Ann Woodward: Yes
 - 4. JoAnn Robinson: Yes
 - 5. Clarissa Rowe: Yes
 - 6. Pamela Heidell: Yes
 - 7. Eric Helmuth: Yes
- m. Eric Helmuth will notify consulting committees of this application and properly notate it in the report to Town Meeting.

Discussion and vote: DPCD Memo on Emergency Rental Assistance Program

- 1) Eric Helmuth introduced the update memo from Erin Zwirko of the Department of Planning and Community Development. The memo included demographics of recipients and a few requests of the Committee regarding use of the funds, as well as answering questions previously asked by the Committee.
 - a. Eugene Benson noted the administrative funds need to come from one of the sources of funding, and this request seems reasonable. The Committee agreed with this assessment and finds the request reasonable.
 - b. Ann Woodward feels the program seemed to favor existing applicants, as opposed to new applicants. JoAnn Robinson believes this is an important point to be clarified as people continue to lose their jobs. Eric Helmuth stated this does not seem to preclude new applicants, but this sentiment can be shared following the meeting.
 - c. The Committee discussed the apparent lottery nature of the disbursement mechanism. Collectively, they would like further details on how this works so they may understand whether there are applicants not receiving funding.
 - d. Pamela Heidell asked whether the Committee can change the parameters of the funding to widen the reach, and Eric Helmuth said it could be considered if they apply for additional funds.

- e. Clarissa Rowe moved approval of the requests outlined in the memo, Eugene Benson seconded.
- f. Roll call vote:
 - 1. Eugene Benson: Yes
 - 2. Leslie Mayer: Yes
 - 3. Ann Woodward: Yes
 - 4. JoAnn Robinson: Yes
 - 5. Clarissa Rowe: Yes
 - 6. Pamela Heidell: Yes
 - 7. Eric Helmuth: Yes

Adjourn

- 1) Clarissa Rowe made motion to adjourn at 4:40pm, JoAnn Robinson seconded.
 - a. Roll call vote:
 - 1. Eugene Benson: Yes
 - 2. Leslie Mayer: Yes
 - 3. Ann Woodward: Yes
 - 4. JoAnn Robinson: Yes
 - 5. Clarissa Rowe: Yes
 - 6. Pamela Heidell: Yes
 - 7. Eric Helmuth: Yes